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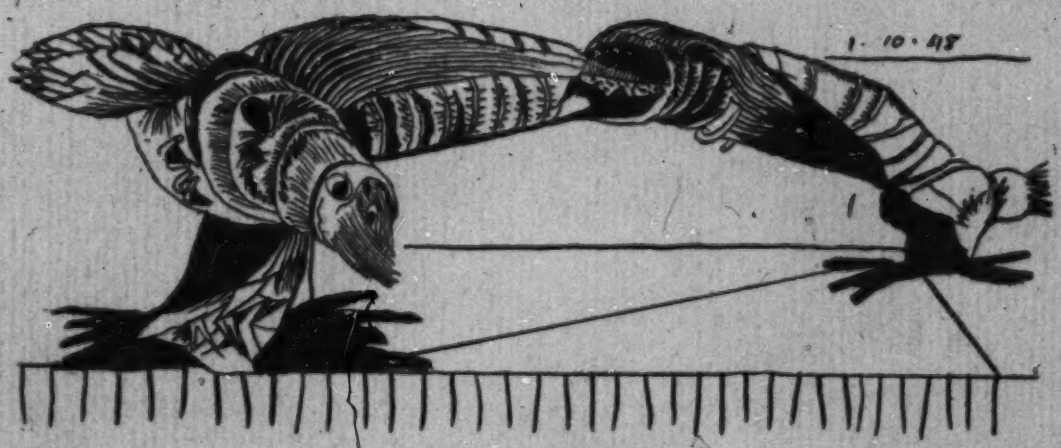
Graham Sutherland

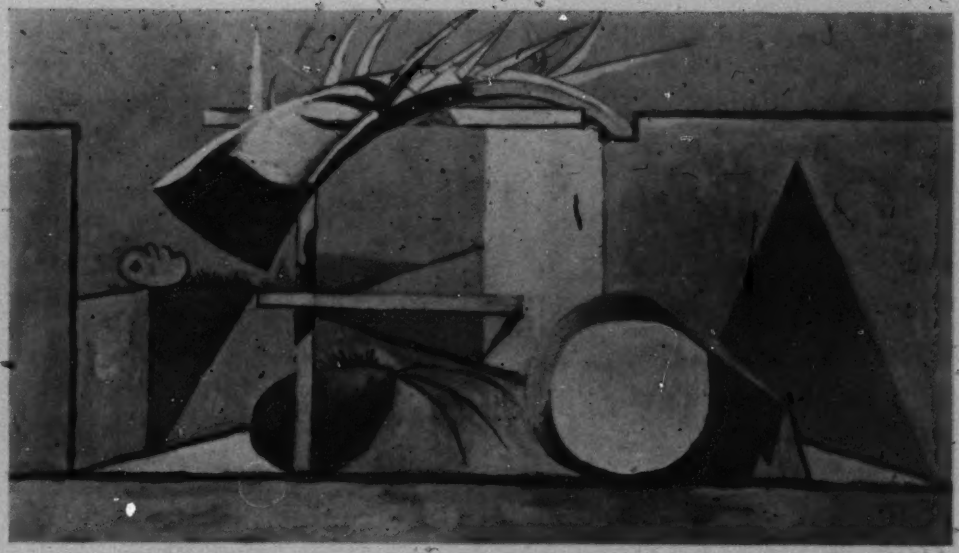


NOVEMBER 16—DECEMBER 4, 1948

BUCHHOLZ GALLERY

CURT VALENTIN

32 EAST 57 STREET · NEW YORK



GRAHAM SUTHERLAND'S RECENT WORK

Mr. Sutherland's* vision of the Mediterranean is certainly different from yours or mine. We see it as it appears on coloured postcards of the Esterel—bright blue sea, bright red rocks, bright green trees. Or as it appears in Renoir, with the light breaking up all the contours and fusing the colours into a feathery iridescence. Or, perhaps, as it appears in Matisse, with the fronds of palm-trees seen through a window, scything the sky above a sea elegantly slashed with the white of pointed sails. . . .

The southern sky we know as inescapably blue becomes, in Mr. Sutherland's pictures, pink or green. Disconcerting? Possibly. I know only that the first time I saw one of these skies I was at once, as it were, infected with the artist's joy in the violence of Mediterranean light. It was not until a minute later that I became conscious of the strange method he had used to convey this violence. Other prevailing colours are the opulent yellow of gourds, the green of vine-leaves, the turquoise of the copper sulphate with which the vines are sprayed, the violet and mauve of southern shadows. The forms

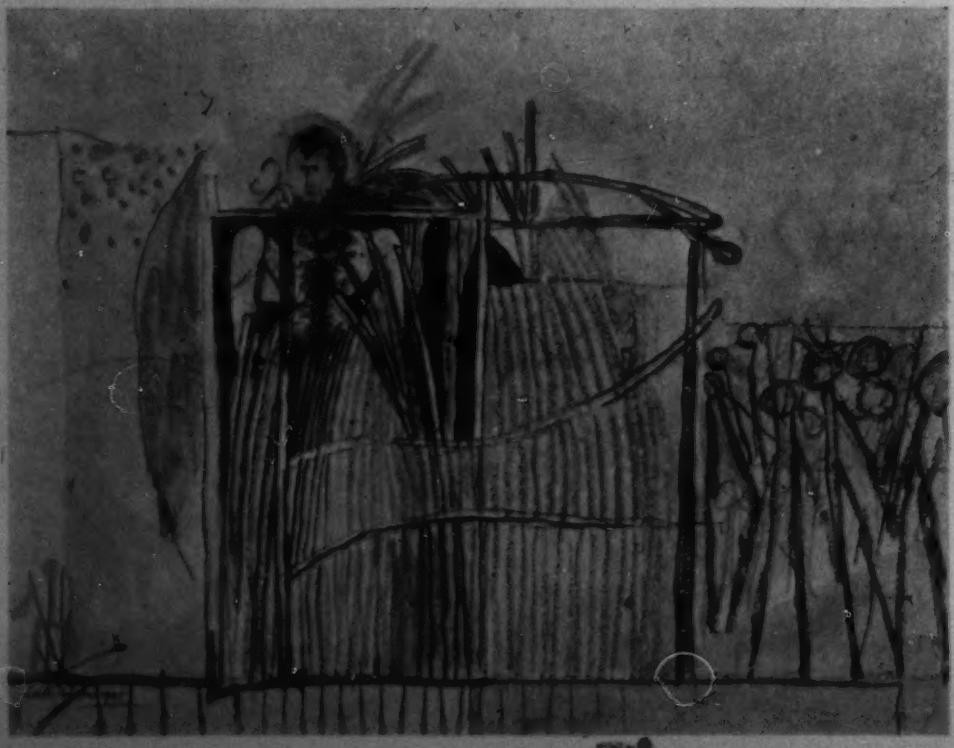
*In the spring of 1946 the Buchholz Gallery held the first one-man show of the work of Graham Sutherland.

* In 1947 and 1948 the artist made several trips to the south of France, to which Raymond Mortimer is referring in his article of which we are reprinting excerpts.

preferred are jagged—banana-leaves that tear themselves into tiny strips, the sharp angles of the vine-leaves and the cogged edges of the palm-branches, which are used for fencing with their leaves chopped off. Mr. Sutherland remains fascinated by the fierce points he used in his pictures of thorns, at the time when he was preparing his great "Crucifixion" for the Northampton Church.

Into the Mediterranean basin, the birthplace of Phidias and Raphael and Cézanne, the adopted home of Poussin and Claude and Ingres, into this gravely harmonious landscape, Mr. Sutherland seems to have brought an obsessive, though unconscious, sense of tragedy, springing—one presumes—at once from his Celtic blood and from the beastliness of the time in which he lives.

A world lacerated by wars, pustulent with concentration camps, is hardly calculated to produce idyllic painting. It is the fault not of the artists but of their environment that they can no longer offer us the delicious visions of a Giorgione, a Watteau or a Renoir. . . .



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Mr. Sutherland's earlier works seem infused with an almost pantheistic love of nature. He painted Welsh mountains as if they were animate beings with which he identified himself. Something of this feeling remains. But now more usually he seems to find in nature symbols of human suffering and cruelty. The Southern vegetation hardens into instruments of torture. The palm—traditional emblem of the martyr's victory—is degraded into a weapon for his executioner.

Tragic art cannot be generally acceptable, because of the ugliness that is part of its material—the blood pouring from Oedipus's eyes, the madness of Lear and Alving, the terror-distorted mouths of the victims of Guernica. Though not in this way horrifying, Mr. Sutherland's Mediterranean pictures seem formidable as well as beautiful. They are, nevertheless, an expression of happiness. Mr. Sutherland goes so far as to consider them replete with gaiety; and my attempt to interpret them may well be wrong, for every individual looks at a work of art with eyes influenced by his own preoccupations. . . .

RAYMOND MORTIMER

CATALOGUE

OILS:

1946

1 Chimère
70 x 36 inches

1947

2 Palms
16 x 13 inches

3 Pink Palms
11 x 18½ inches

4 Abstraction under a Mauve Sky
10 x 13 inches

5 The Palm Leaf
10 x 13 inches

6 Palm and House
43¾ x 36½ inches

7 Palm Palisade
43½ x 36½ inches

8 Pink Vine Pergola
20 x 25½ inches

7

9 Still Life with Banana Leaf
11 x 21½ inches

10 Landscape with Fields and Vine
13 x 11 inches

1948.

11 Large Vine Pergola
52½ x 33 inches

12 Cigale I
27 x 20 inches

13 Cigale II
27 x 20 inches

14 Landscape with Banana Leaf
16 x 16 inches

15 Landscape with Corn
14½ x 12¼ inches

16 Figure with Vine Structure
11 x 20 inches

17 Green Vine Pergola
19 x 22½ inches

18 Banana Leaf over Landscape
18½ x 22 inches

19 Palm and Wall
22½ x 39¼ inches

20 The Gourd
20 x 20¼ inches

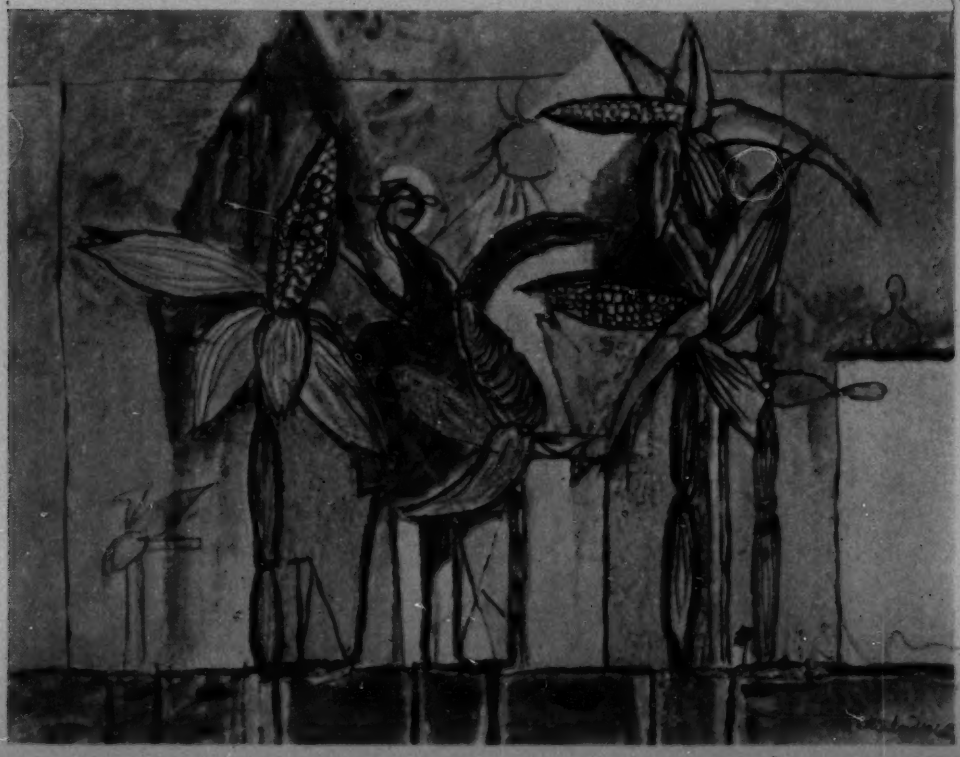
GOUACHES:

1947-1948

21 Palm Palisade
13 x 10½ inches

22 Maize
8¾ x 11 inches

23 Maize and Landscape
8¾ x 11 inches



24 Tourettes
8¾ x 11 inches

25 Insects
8¾ x 11 inches

26 Articulate Forms and Hills
8¾ x 11 inches

26 Hanging Maize
8¾ x 11 inches

27 Still Life with Pomegranate
8¾ x 11 inches

28 Leaves and Wall
8¾ x 11 inches

29 Landscape and Terrace
8¾ x 11 inches

30 Turning Form I
8¾ x 11 inches

31 Reclining Stone Form
8¾ x 11 inches

32 Organic Forms
8¾ x 11 inches

33 Figure in Enclosure
15¼ x 19½ inches

34 Maize and Gourd
15¼ x 19½ inches

35 Figure and Maize
15¼ x 19½ inches

36 Vine Pergola
15¼ x 19½ inches

37 Palm and Landscape
15¼ x 19½ inches

38 Turning Form II
15¼ x 19½ inches

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